

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY LEADERSHIP GROUP (NPA-PLG) MEETING RECORD

DECEMBER 15, 2004 -- SEATAC, WASHINGTON

ATTENDEES

- **Brad Boswell** –Northwest Automatic Vending Machine Association & Washington Soft Drink Association – boswell72@comcast.net
- **Charlotte Claybrooke**, State Department of Transportation - claybrookec@wsdot.wa.gov
- **Vic Colman**, State Department of Health - victor.colman@doh.wa.gov
- **Barbara Culp** – Bicycle Alliance - barbc@bicyclealliance.org
- **Shelley Curtis** - Children's Alliance - shelley@childrensalliance.org
- **Rhoda Donkin**, State Department of Health – rhoda.donkin@doh.wa.gov
- **Rob Johnson**, Transportation Choices Coalition rob@transportationchoices.org
- **Craig McLaughlin**, State Board of Health – craig.mclaughlin@doh.wa.gov
- **Kristen Richmond** – American Heart Association, NW Chapter – kristen.richmond@heart.org
- **Leslie Zenz** – Washington State Department of Agriculture and Food Policy Council lzenz@agr.wa.gov

Brad – a new member to the group - explained his interest in participating in the group and some of the associations he represents are working on:

- These groups recognize obesity is a serious problem and they are interested in helping to address it. Their position is “it’s a calories in – calories out issue” – that there are “no bad foods – only bad diets.”
- Their focus is on the physical activity side of things – supportive of safe routes to schools – programs to encourage walking, etc.
- Interested in supporting where they can – helping with transportation, willing to throw their support behind many of the policies this group came up with – has been active in support of SB5436.

FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION ON THE POLICY PRIORITIZATION PROCESS

The group reviewed the results of the on-line policy survey and provided feedback on the process used to identify and prioritize policy ideas, and suggestions for moving this work forward.

- We’ve accomplished a great deal in a short period of time. This is difficult work – and it’s hard to know what other folks are up to – opportunities are missed – critical information isn’t shared in a timely way. This has been very helpful.
- We should be looking for opportunities to combine nutrition and physical activity approaches – legislatively and in the development of programs and policies.

- Keep eye on and understand who might oppose some ideas and why.
- Watch for unintended consequences – legal, and other.
- Need “common definitions” – this process was rushed – ideas were not fully developed, not everybody was on the same page about what they were voting on.
- If we work a similar process in the future, we should build in more time to review, discuss and craft the ideas we vote on.
- One unintended consequence of this rushed approach is that we might put ideas out there that are misunderstood, generating opposition or concern when it’s not necessary.
- This is an opportunity to integrate our legislative efforts – rise above “special interests” – there is tremendous power in coming to the legislature as a group with a single message – especially if you bring along “surprising” partners.
- Don’t include too many issues in a bill – but don’t lose sight of the big picture – take an incremental approach but keeping your “eyes on the prize.”
- Legislation gets drafted and introduced in all kinds of ways – most of it is not coordinated or focused – by getting in front of the process and proactively setting priorities, this group can help drive the agenda more effectively.
- Don’t make the legislative session your primary focus – it’s important, but should not drive this work – it comes and goes – and can sometimes help mobilize folks – but it’s fleeting – this is long-term work – don’t lose that vision.
- If this group continues, we have the opportunity to develop a long-term policy vision and strategy to realize it – not only at the State level – but an integrated approach across all levels of our communities.

NEXT STEPS

- Convene a meeting of the group’s steering committee to identify communication and support needs – and decide how those needs will be addressed during the legislative session.
- Group members take advantage of the contacts in the group to ask for support and to keep each other informed about important dates and development.
- Group should consider meeting during session to keep each other updated – and to keep the momentum and discussion alive.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

The group discussed the policy ideas that received the highest number of votes in depth – clarifying the intent of the policies, providing background on the policies, identifying issues related to the policies, etc. After these discussions, the group identified “champions” for each of these policies, if possible, and identified possible next steps and possible legislative strategies for supporting these policies during the 2005 legislative session.

TOP PRIORITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICIES

“ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION”

PA1, PA2, PA5- combined: - *received 19 votes total*

- PA1: *“Complete the streets”*: Establish policies that would require all road construction to include facilities for bikes, pedestrians, transit, etc. and support a new revenue funding package supported by WSDOT, Association of WA Cities, and Association of WA Counties and discussed by the Transportation Commission to implement the policies. (7 votes)
- PA2: *Increase funding for Safe and Active Routes to Schools Program* (4 votes)
- PA5: *Increase funding for “active transportation” – start at 5% of DOT’s budget and raise it over time to 15% of DOT funding that would be dedicated to “active transportation” – i.e. bikes, walking, etc.* (7 votes)

NOTE: *Group decided to combine PA 1,2 and 5 because they are all related to a similar set of issues concerning the how “active transportation” is defined and how active/alternative transportation programs and facilities are funded.*

PA 1,2,5: Clarification and Background

- In 2005 – Counties and cities will request more funding for alternative transportation facilities – with funding coming from a 5-cent a gallon gas tax.
- The 18th amendment limits the use of gas tax revenue to fund road projects and not alternative transportation, although there are some that believe there may be some wiggle room and are looking for a way around this perceived barrier.
- Current policies do require that many road projects include facilities for bikes, pedestrians, transit, etc. – the problem is that facilities for bikes, pedestrians, etc. have a difficult time getting funded if they are not tied to a road project.

PA 1,2,5: NEXT STEPS – LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

“Champions”¹

- **Rob Johnson** – Transportation Choice Coalition - rob@transportationchoices.org
- **Barbara Culp** - Bicycle Alliance - barbc@bicyclealliance.org
- **Paula Reeves**, State Dept. of Transportation - ReevesP@wsdot.wa.gov
- Challenge is to come up with a funding source that is more flexible and can be used to support a more diverse set of transportation alternatives in a more integrated way an approach that also addresses PA and related public health issues.

¹ “Champions” are those who identified themselves as point people – either as potential advocates or those with specific technical knowledge of the policy issue.

- Perception is that there is a large \$ need for roads – and that “active transportation” is a “nice-to-have” – larger issue of competing with funding for basic needs.
- Compliance with the 18th amendment - what does “compliance” mean? The Bicycle Alliance is working with others to more clearly define what can be funded with gas tax dollars.

MAINTAIN FOCUS ON SB 5436 IMPLEMENTATION

PA3: ~~Increase funding for~~ *Maintain focus on SB 5436 school that establishes requirement for school districts to develop and implement, and enforce nutrition and physical activity policies - **received 10 total votes***

NOTE: *Group decided to change language from “Increase funding for SB 5436...” to “Maintain focus on SB 5436...” because current focus is not on increasing funding, but on educating legislators about how little physical education kids are now getting at school – requirement is for 100 minutes each week.*

PA3: Background and Clarification

- SB 5436 requires school districts to draft sample NPA policies by August 2005.
- School districts may meet the requirements of the law, but without additional funding and resources, without an increased focus on NPA, without incentives and stronger accountability, the draft policies districts adopt will not have much of an impact.
- How much of this sort of policy and direction should be set by the State, and how much should be locally driven and controlled is a significant issue.

PA 3: NEXT STEPS – LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

“Champions”:

- **Kristen Richmond** – American Heart Association, NW Chapter - Kristen.richmond@heart.org
- **Mike O’Sullivan** – Action for Healthy Kids - michael.o'sullivan@cancer.org

- Kristen is already working with lots of organizations that care about this issue to contact and help educate legislators about the current reality related PE in schools.
- Work is being done to schedule an education session on PE and PA for Senate and House committees – legislators are currently not aware of how easy it is for districts to get out of providing meaningful PE programs.
- STEPs program is now collecting information on what districts are currently doing and plan to do related to PE – will be helpful in deciding on next steps. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to contact all of the school districts in the State to find out what they are up to, and to provide them support and technical assistance to improve their PE programs. Part of the strategy needs to be focused on mobilizing local communities to urge their local school districts to bolster PE programs.
- Long-term there is an opportunity to tie this into safe routes to school initiatives – possible tie safe routes funding to the quality/impact of a school district’s NPA policies and programs.

➡ MONITOR TO ENSURE EARLS RELATED TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION ARE MET

PA13: Maintain current statutory focus on “health and fitness” Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EARLs) per HB 2195 - **received 9 votes**

- Current focus is on ensuring these learning requirements are met – that school districts address them in their curriculums – current approach is defensive – monitoring – watchdog stance.

➡ REVIVING SB 6294

PA8: – Establish ways to ensure follow-through, accountability, enforcement of the new PA language in SB 6294 (Franklin) that adds PA as a variable in community planning. This also presents an opportunity to address “equity-access.” – **received 7 votes**

PA8: Background and Clarification

- This was written as if SB 6294 had passed – it didn’t pass – it didn’t get out of committee for a vote.
- It will reintroduced in 2005 – perception is that it will cost \$ - and anything that requires new funding will have a very difficult time of in 2005
- For this bill to pass, cities, counties, transportation will need to support it.
- Current draft presents a golden opportunity to incorporate many other PA policy ideas – and integrate them into community planning. Even if this bill does not pass in 2005 – continuing to work it and reintroduce it could be part of longer-term strategy.

PA 8: NEXT STEPS – LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY “Champion”

WA Coalition for Promotion of Physical Activity - <http://www.beactive.org/about.html>

OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY IDEAS DISCUSSED

PA4:– Mandate greater % set-aside for trails and paths and increase funding and accountability compliance.

NOTE: Group agreed to change “accountability” to “compliance” because current discussion is around compliance with set-aside requirements – these will be addressed in 2007.

PA7: – Eliminate free parking around high schools; provide student parking passes incentives for car-pooling, etc.

- Group discussed maybe amending GMA to include PA in community planning. SB 6294 will be reintroduced in 2005 – may be opportunity to fold in this and other policies related policies.

TOP-PRIORITY NUTRITION POLICIES

➡ COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL NUTRITION APPROACH, INCLUDING LIMITS ON COMPETITIVE FOODS SOLD IN SCHOOLS

N7 – *Comprehensive school nutrition legislation, limiting the types of beverages and competitive food that may be sold in k-12 schools (similar to HB 2760) – received 9 votes*

N7 - Background and Clarification

- Competitive foods are any foods/beverages sold in school that are not part of the school lunch program (similar to HB 2760) and SB 5436 had similar concept
- HB 2760 will be reintroduced in 2005
 - Establishes statewide mandate – a method of accountability, prescribes nutrition guidelines – nutritional standards for competitive foods
- Will likely be opposed by soft drink/vending groups – they oppose statewide mandate on these types of issues and favor local control – their position is that there are “no bad foods, only bad diets.”
- Soft drink/vending groups support a process already underway to develop model policies and strongly support nutrition education regarding choice – eating a balanced diet.
- Along with this policy approach, the soft drink and vending industries would also oppose N5 – *Create food-pricing strategies to promote consumption of healthy foods* – which would involve either finding ways to reduce the price of healthy foods and/or increasing the price of unhealthy foods. Industry would also oppose N3 – *Levy sin, sugar, candy taxes*.
- If industry ends up opposing policy ideas like N7, 5, and 3, it will not be able to help with other initiatives focused on achieving similar goals.
- The primary questions are around access and ability to pay. How do you increase access to healthy foods, especially in communities where it’s easy to access high-calorie, low-nutrition, relatively inexpensive foods. Some of the issues are transportation-related. It’s in these areas where industry groups like the vending industry can help – getting locally grown produce to schools, etc.

N7 - NEXT STEPS -- LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

“Champions”

- **Kristen Richmond** – American Heart Association, NW Chapter - Kristen.richmond@heart.org
- **Shelly Curtis** – Children’s Alliance - shelley@childrensalliance.org

- This will be very difficult to move at this time – more effective strategy would be to work on broad implementation of SB 5436 instead.
- The daunting challenge with SB 5436 is how do we reach out to all school districts in the State before August in a meaningful impactful way.

➡ MAINTAIN CURRENT PARTICIPATION LEVELS FOR WIC AND SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAMS

N6 – *Ensure adequate State funding to maintain current participation levels for WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP)– received 6 votes*

N6 - Background and Clarification

- If funding levels are not maintained for the Senior FMNP, the number of participants will drop from 10,000 to 3,000.
- WIC FMNP facing similar challenge as federal funding is reduced.

- Both Senior and WIC FMNP require a State funding match.
- There was a lack of agency support in past, but now DOH is very supportive.
- The Senior FMNP is in DSHS, WIC FMNP is in DOH, current senior coordinator has taken a job in DOH, but the Senior FMNP will most likely stay in DSHS for the time being.
- Effective strategy for advocating for these programs needs to combine a focus on increasing access to healthy foods, and the associated health benefits – and the important support these programs provide to local farmers. The WA Dept. of Agriculture strongly supports the introducing local foods – opportunity to work together – build links in support of these programs – there are ideas in NPA Policy Resource Guide we could reference and build on linking PA, nutrition, and transportation of, and access to, healthy, locally-grown foods.
- There is an opportunity to link up with industry to address some of the transportation and other challenges associated with increasing access to healthy foods.
- There are lots of folks already working on this – welcome opportunity for others to link up with them.

N6 - NEXT STEPS -- LEGISLATIVE STRATEGY

“Champion”

➤ **Shelly Curtis** – Children’s Alliance - shelley@childrensalliance.org

➡ MONITOR TO ENSURE EARLS RELATED TO PHYSICAL EDUCATION ARE MET

N11: Maintain current statutory focus on “health and fitness” Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EARLs) per 2195 - ***received 7 votes***

- ***Same as PA13***: Current focus is on ensuring these learning requirements are met – that school districts address them in their curriculums – current approach is defensive – monitoring – watchdog stance.

OTHER NUTRITION POLICY IDEAS DISCUSSED

N14: *Promote community vegetable gardens – set aside public land for gardens – maybe include property tax deduction for community gardens – could be included in future versions of SB 6294 (Franklin)*

- This is another golden opportunity to link local food production with improving access to healthy nutritious food – addressing the difficult questions of access and cost.